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TOMMY GONZALEZ
CITY MANAGER



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August 27, 2015

NEWS RELEASE

Department of Public Health Reports First West Nile Virus-Related Death this Year Officials remind residents to take precautions to avoid mosquito bites

EL PASO, Texas – The City of El Paso Department of Public Health announced today that an elderly man who lived in the Mission Valley has become the first person to die this year after having contracted the West Nile virus. Health officials say the man had several underlying medical conditions. He was the 8th known person to contract the virus in the area this year.

"It is with a heavy heart that we make this announcement. It is never easy to report that someone has passed away from this or any other preventable disease," said Robert Resendes, Public Health Director. "Our thoughts and prayers are with this man and his loved ones."

There were no West Nile virus-related deaths reported last year in El Paso County. In 2013 there were two West Nile virus-related deaths in the El Paso area. More statistical information is available at:

<http://gis.elpasotexas.gov/health/>

There have been 7 additional cases of the disease confirmed in El Paso this year.

Extra precaution is recommended during the monsoon season when greater opportunities exist for mosquito breeding. The best way to avoid exposure to mosquito-borne diseases is to practice the "four Ds":

- **DEET** - Use insect repellents when you go outdoors. Repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, and some oil of lemon eucalyptus and para-menthane-diol products provide longer-lasting protection. To optimize safety and effectiveness, repellents should be used according to the label instructions.
- **DRESS** - When weather permits, wear long sleeves, long pants, and socks when outdoors. Mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing, so spraying clothes with repellent containing permethrin or another EPA-registered repellent will give extra protection. Don't apply repellents containing permethrin directly to skin. Rather, spray permethrin-containing products only on clothing.
- **DUSK and DAWN** - Take extra care during peak mosquito biting hours. Take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing from dusk to dawn or consider avoiding outdoor activities during these times.
- **DRAIN** - Help reduce the number of mosquitoes around and outside your home by emptying standing water from flowerpots, gutters, buckets, pool covers, pet water dishes, discarded tires, and birdbaths on a regular basis.

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You can also mosquito-proof your home by installing or repairing screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out. The City's Vector Control Program is also continuing its proactive fogging and treatment of areas of concern. They actively monitor reservoirs, drains, inactive pools, and investigate citizen's complaints of potential mosquito infestations. Residents may call 311 to report any standing water or areas of concern.

Education

In effort to increase awareness about the disease and ways the public can protect themselves, the Department of Public Health has added a West Nile virus session to the list of presentations offered by the Speakers Bureau. Local civic and community organizations can schedule a presentation that will include background on the disease, prevention methods, as well as what people can look out for in regards to signs and symptoms of infection. Presentations can be scheduled by visiting www.EPHealth.com and clicking on "Special Projects."

The efforts and services offered by the Department of Public Health support the City of El Paso's strategic goal to nurture and promote a healthy, sustainable community. For more information on the programs and services offered by the Department of Public Health, please visit www.EPHealth.com or dial 2-1-1.

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